

CITY COUNCILMAN OUTRAGED

Citizens Coalition Suit Charges Political Infiltration by Police, Asks Court Ban

By **BRUCE KEPPEL**
Times Staff Writer

A citizens coalition created to end political spying by police undercover agents, discovering a suspected spy in its own ranks, sued the Los Angeles Police Department Tuesday seeking to ban the practice.

Representatives of the Citizens Committee on Police Repression also took their complaint to the Police Commission, which promised to investigate if and why an officer identified as Edward Camarillo infiltrated the committee, as charged, in 1978.

Los Angeles City Councilman Zev Yaroslavsky told The Times that Camarillo, purporting to be a committee member, worked with several of the councilman's staff members on a proposed local freedom-of-information act to provide limited public access to police intelligence files.

Yaroslavsky said he would ask the City Council today to "act immediately" on the charged infiltration of this group and his staff.

"The Police Department has a lot of explaining to do, to me and to the Citizens Committee," Yaroslavsky declared.

But, Police Commission President

Stephen Reinhardt warned: "It is important in this case . . . that we not prejudge the facts."

Commission guidelines do ban spying on peaceful, law-abiding organizations, unless a crime is suspected to have been committed or is thought to be imminent, Reinhardt said.

"But," he added, "it doesn't necessarily follow that a violation has necessarily occurred (if police were to do so)."

"We, as a commission, don't know at this point what the reason for the

Councilman worked for local freedom-of-information ordinance.

infiltration was, if there was infiltration," he said.

Chief Daryl F. Gates, who is named in the suit, along with his predecessor, Edward Davis, and several other top officers and the city of Los Angeles, sat impassively as the group presented its case.

At one point, however, he com-

mented that if the group had done nothing wrong, "you have nothing to worry about."

Linda Valentino and Jeff Cohen, speaking for the committee, which is a coalition of more than 40 groups, said Camarillo had presented himself as a law student interested in righting social wrongs.

The committee furnished the Police Commission copies of attendance sheets bearing Camarillo's name and an Alhambra address, along with an endorsement of the group's stand against "government spying."

Learning of Camarillo's work with his staff, Councilman Yaroslavsky reacted angrily.

"This is an outrage," the councilman said. "There's been an intrusion (by police) into the legislative process, in a very real sense."

"I know Linda Valentino and some of the people in the group," Yaroslavsky continued, "and they are not threats to society. They are not threatening anybody's life, or anything like that. Yet they've been infiltrated."

Yaroslavsky said he worked with the committee "about two years" on a local freedom-of-information act. He began pushing for the law, which exists in the federal government, after learning that a group he led in the early 1970s, the Southern California Council for Soviet Jewry, was on a list of nearly 200 organizations that the LAPD's public disorder intelligence division (PDID) allegedly deemed worth watching.

After the coalition's representatives left the Police Commission hearing, Gates told the commissioners that PDID enters undercover work only where there is some criminal connection.

Gates did not elaborate or directly comment on Tuesday's charge. Cam-

Please Turn to Page 2, Col. 3

LA. TIMES

326-80

COMMON LAWSUIT Seeks to Outlaw Police Infiltration

Continued from First Page

arillo could not be reached for comment.

Police spokesman Cmdr. William Booth later Tuesday said he could not make a comment on the accusations because the department has been asked to make a report on the matter to the Police Commission.

Booth added there is "an officer Ed Camarillo assigned to the Police Department's Records and Identification Division."

The committee's Superior Court lawsuit, filed by the American Civil Liberties Union, which is a member of the coalition, charges that Camarillo joined not only the Citizens Committee on Police Repression but a now-defunct Latino community group, the Center for Autonomous Social Action (CASA).

Camarillo, the suit states, "attended their meetings under false pretenses and reported his observations and findings to his superiors within the LAPD."

"These spying activities," the suit continues, "violate the free speech, association and privacy rights of the members of the subject organizations."

Those rights, it notes, are guaranteed by both the federal and state constitutions.

The suit asks for a permanent ban against "infiltration and spying" and "maintenance of police dossiers" and an award of monetary damages "in an amount subject to proof at trial."

The Citizens Committee had previously named five other undercover officers who had infiltrated lawful political groups, most of them critical of Police Department practices.

"Camarillo's infiltration is not an isolated incident," Valentino said at a press conference at ACLU headquarters. "In fact, it is a consistent LAPD policy. 'You criticize us, we spy on you.'"

Yaroslavsky said, "I'm sure this is only the tip of the iceberg."